

PAPAL MURDER IN CROATIA

By J. J. MURPHY

LIBERALS frequently say, "I think the Catholic church should stop playing politics, but, as far as its religious doctrines are concerned, I don't care what it teaches." In separating Catholic dogma from Catholic politics such liberals show that they understand neither the nature nor the aims of the Roman Catholic church. The fact is that Catholic politics stem directly from the basic dogma of the Catholic church that it is "the one true Church" and the sole spokesman of God. From this same premise it is easily deduced that whoever differs from the divine and infallible teachings of the Roman Catholic church is a criminal (whether he realizes it or not) who violates the law of God and undermines the welfare of society. From this conclusion it is a short step to the God-given right of the Catholic church to exterminate such heretics as enemies of the common good. From then on one is led to the conclusion, subtly proved by the Jesuits, that it is lawful to do evil to prevent a greater evil, and that whatever means are needed to crush heresies are holy and justified, whether they be murder, war, or political partnership with sadistic dictators. As Pope Pius XI said, "When it is a question of saving souls or avoiding greater evils, we would find courage to make a deal (*trattare*) with the Devil in person."¹

The teaching that the Catholic church has the right to kill heretics was boldly

re-asserted in the *Tablet*, official newspaper of the Roman Catholic diocese of Brooklyn, N. Y., in its issue of November, 5, 1938, as follows:

"Heresy is an awful crime . . . and those who start a heresy are more guilty than they who are traitors to the civil government. If the State has the right to punish treason with death, the principle is the same that concedes to the spiritual authority the power of capital punishment over the arch-traitor to truth and Divine revelation . . . A perfect society has the right to its existence . . . and the power of capital punishment is acknowledged for a perfect society . . . Now, the Catholic church is a perfect society, and as such has the right and power to take means to safeguard its existence."

THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS

It was the "Messianic complex" of the Catholic church that led to its Temporal Power, and other endless plots and intrigues for world power that drenched the world in blood for several centuries. The crusades, the Inquisition, St. Bartholomew's Eve, the Thirty Years' War with its millions of victims, are mere high spots in a career of mass murder. No less an authority than the leading 19th century historian, Catholic Lord Acton, found himself forced to admit that "*there had been a grievous evil in the Catholic church consisting of a practice sanctioned by the theory that much wrong may be done for the sake of saving souls, and this tendency . . . was associated with the Papacy which sanctioned, encouraged and implemented it. . . The Papacy contrived murder and massacre*

¹ *Church and State in Fascist Italy*, by D. A. Binchy, a Roman Catholic, p. 83.

on the most cruel and inhuman scale."² The historian Lecky also points to religious persecution at the hands of the medieval clergy as "an amount of cold, passionless, studied and deliberate barbarity unrivaled in the history of mankind."³

Present-day Catholic theologians teach the very same doctrines by which these medieval murders were justified, and by which others will be justified in the future wherever the Catholic church regains political control. The quotations that follow are from textbooks on dogmatic theology written by two 20th century Cardinals and used today in all Catholic seminaries:

"God not only permits the church to use force, but definitely prescribes it to her. There are no efficacious remedies against heresies but medieval laws."⁴

"But if one considers what a grave matter it is to corrupt the Catholic faith which is based on the authority of God, and if one considers what harm it does to society, he will easily understand that, if traitors or murderers are justly condemned to die, those who publicly undermine the Catholic faith much more richly deserve to be put to death."⁵

Present-day Catholic teaching that advocates the murder of heretics is not a matter of mere theory. It is carried out whenever possible. And it was to make it possible that the Vatican plotted with the Axis powers for world control, as I have shown in a series of booklets on Clerical Fascism in Europe. How this counter-Reformation was

aimed not only at Protestantism and democracy but also at the schismatic religion of the Greek Orthodox Catholics has been proved in articles written for back issues of *The Converted Catholic Magazine*.⁶ The present article shows a new aspect of the Axis-Vatican attack on the Greek Orthodox church, for it treats of that church not in Greece, or the Dodecanesian Islands, or Slovenia, as did three previous articles, but of the Orthodox church in Croatia, a Catholic part of Yugoslavia.

MASS MURDER IN CROATIA

The first publicity given to the murder of members of the Greek Orthodox church at the hands of the Catholic-Fascist government in Croatia appeared in the *N. Y. Times* of January 3, 1942. It quoted the documentary report of the Archbishop of the Orthodox church, made public by the Yugoslav government-in-exile, but discreetly omitted the part played by the Roman Catholic hierarchy:

"According to the Archbishop, the wholesale killings of 180,000 Orthodox Serbs were carried out on orders of Quisling Pavelich and members of the Ustashi . . . Priests' beards were pulled out and their throats cut. In one case a priest was forced to dig the grave for his own son. The son was tortured before his own father's eyes."

My Native Land, a book by Louis Adamic, gives clearer evidence of the part played by the Roman Catholic clergy in these massacres. On page 38 he says: "I shall show in detail later that a large section of the Roman Cath-

² Lord Acton's *Correspondence*, page 54.

³ *Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, by Lecky. Vol. I, p. 326.

⁴ From the commentary of Jesuit Cardinal Billot on the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas, as quoted by the historian G. G. Coulton, p. 88 of *The Death Penalty for Heresy from 1184 to 1921*.

⁵ From Cardinal Lepicier's textbook, *De Progressu et Stabilitate Dogmatis*, Part II, Art. VI.

⁶ Reference is made to the following former articles of this magazine: *Behind the Graeco-Roman Conflict*, May, 1941; *Two Friends of the Pope*, December, 1943; *Persecution of the Greek Orthodox Church*, December, 1944; *Clerical Fascism in Yugoslavia*, February, 1945.

olic priesthood in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had been pro-*Ustashi* before the collapse of Yugoslavia, supported the pogroms against the Orthodox Serbians. . . At least two Croatian bishops, including Archbishop Sharich of Sarajevo, were openly pro-*Ustashi*."

The first full exposé of the Roman Catholic murder of Orthodox Christians to reach the magazine world was given by the liberal bi-weekly, *Christianity and Crisis*, published by Reinhold Niebuhr and other liberal Protestants who ordinarily indulge in appeasing Roman Catholicism. In its issue of June 29, 1942, the following open declaration of facts appeared:

"In the present Croatian territory there are five million Roman Catholic Croats, and 1,800,000 Eastern Orthodox Serbs. These latter are now being persecuted in a most cruel manner. Of the Eastern Orthodox

bishops, one has been killed, several have been imprisoned, the others have been forced to leave the country. Of the Orthodox priests a considerable number have been assassinated, many have been imprisoned, the others have been thrown out of the country. Thus this large body of Eastern Orthodox is now without any pastoral guidance, and there are no longer any Orthodox religious services. It is counted that several hundred thousand Orthodox have become victims of the systematic persecution through imprisonment, maltreatment, plunder, and that several tens of thousands have been killed. One of the officials of the Croatian State has formulated the purpose of this policy as the elimination of the Orthodox leadership so that the rest without leaders can be Catholicized, and so that within ten years Croatia will be a Catholic state. . .

"Orthodox officials are being notified that in the Croatian State only those



Serbian priests being hanged in a churchyard by the Ustashi Inquisition

Picture from "Martyrdom of the Serbs."

can remain in service who belong to the Roman Catholic Church.

"Certain Roman Catholic periodicals in Croatia approve of this persecution. Thus the organ of the Archbishop of Sarajevo defends the use of 'revolutionary methods' in the 'service of truth, justice, and honesty,' and states that 'it is a silly idea, unworthy of disciples of Christ, that the struggle against evil could be carried on in a noble manner and with gloves on.'"

The real revelation of the barbarous persecution of the Greek Orthodox Christians at the hands of the Roman hierarchy is revealed in detail in a heavily documented book "prepared and issued by the Serbian Eastern Orthodox church" entitled, *Martyrdom of the Serbs*. It is to a large extent a compilation of first-hand testimony gathered on the actual scene of the crimes by the Committee of Belgrade and official commissions of Orthodox prelates. A preface to this book, published in 1943, was written by the Rt. Rev. William T. Manning, leading Protestant Episcopal prelate in this country. In his opening sentence Bishop Manning says: "*I feel it a great honor to be asked to write a foreword for this officially prepared and issued Book of Martyrs of the Serbian Church in Yugoslavia.*" The rest of the present article will be documented with page references to this book. It should be noted in the quotations that follow that the Roman Catholic church is referred to simply as "Catholic" in contrast to the Greek Catholics of Serbia who are spoken of as the Orthodox or Serb Orthodox. Since the book is concerned with the persecution of Serb Orthodox Christians in Yugoslavia who have been tortured and murdered by the Roman Catholic Croats, also of Yugoslavia, the term Croat is synonymous with Roman Catholic just as Serb stands for the Orthodox Chris-

tians of Serbia or Croatia.

UNION OF CHURCH AND FASCISM

The Fascist organization of Croatia was the *Ustashi*, made up exclusively of Roman Catholics. Apart from the destruction of democratic government and the establishment of a Catholic-Fascist state, its main purpose has been to convert all Serb Orthodox Christians to Roman Catholicism or exterminate them as heretics. The head of the *Ustashi* and puppet ruler of Croatia under Hitler was Ante Pavelich, a Roman Catholic terrorist. Pierre van Paassen in his book *That Day Alone* (p. 483) notes that Pavelich was trained in Catholic Hungary and worked as a trigger man for Mussolini, spending much of his time in Fascist Italy, after the assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia, at which time he was received in audience by Pope Pius XI. After Hitler seized Croatia, and Pavelich was about to be sent there to run the puppet government, the N. Y. *Times* told how Pope Pius XII received "in private audience, first, the new king of Croatia, the Italian Duke of Spoleto, just before he took the throne; secondly, the traitorous Ante Pavelich and his Croat delegation." It turned out that the new "king" was afraid even to enter Croatia and Pavelich ruled alone, subject to the guidance of Hitler and the Catholic hierarchy. The *Washington Post* of February 21, 1943, noted that, as in former years, Pope Pius XII had telegraphed Pavelich his cordial wishes for another successful year. Such direct approval of the Pope was widely publicized in Croatia where it greatly strengthened the hold of Pavelich.

Martyrdom of the Serbs (p. 172-4) makes clear that the Catholic church in Croatia established the many thousands of *Ustashi* around a mere nucleus of

“. . . And seem a saint when most I play the devil.”



“And thus I hide my naked villainy,
With old, odd ends, stolen forth of Holy Writ,
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.”

—From Shakespeare's *King Richard III*
Act 1, Scene 3.

specially trained terrorists:

“Certain circles claim that these atrocities in Croatia are the work of a small number of *Ustashi*. This claim is not correct. It is true that Quisling Pavelich brought with him from Italy only about one hundred *Ustashi*. The others were organized in Croatia itself. In the cities they consisted first of all of students of the Gymnasium and schools of higher learning, then men of the merchant and artisan classes, all good and peaceful members of the Croatian Heroes organization. . . A great portion of the Croatian youths in the intermediate and high schools participated most actively in the bloody terror perpetrated by the *Ustashi*

against the Serbs. They were the so-called ‘Croatian Heroes,’ members of an organization which was founded and led by the Catholic priesthood. After the fall of Yugoslavia the Catholic priesthood was in closest collaboration with the *Ustashi* in the massacring of the Serbs, and it cannot be said that it was the doings of individuals limited in scope and time. On the contrary, by the number of priests in the towns where the atrocities were committed it may be plainly observed that those priests led that bloody orgy according to an earlier planned system, methodically and with precision.”

“The Catholic priesthood in Croatia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia carried

out an intensive propaganda campaign for the *Ustashi* government. For years so-called Eucharistic Congresses were held, which were religious manifestations only superficially, but in fact were for extremist political purposes."

It is pointed out on page 241 that, "the close cooperation between the Catholic church and the *Ustashi* authorities is known, which is also evidenced by the fact that among the *Ustashi* officials there are a great number of Catholic priests."

Beginning on page 174, several detailed examples of priest leadership in the persecution are given. More than a score of priests are named with the caution that these are a mere fraction of the number that led the Catholic mobs. Without choosing from among them I will quote merely the first two that happen to be mentioned. Each is preceded by the name of the city where the clergy won notoriety:

"Sarajevo. Dr. Ivan Saric, Catholic archbishop of Vrh-Bosanski, a fanatical Serbophobe of old, began immediately after the fall of Yugoslavia and the commencement of the anti-Serbian terror to write poems of praise in honor of Quisling Pavelich, lauding his destructive work against the Serbs. The Croatian newspapers of that time were full of his poems of praise. Still stronger was his influence over the direct [terroristic] acts against the Serbs in Bosnia. His right-hand man was the priest of Sarajevo, Father Brale, who was a former *Ustashi* officer and personally and openly led that attack.

"Livno. Father Srecko Peric, a monk of Livno, formerly Catholic pastor at Nis, preached from the altar that all the Serbs should be slaughtered. *After the slaughter he promised to absolve the murderers of their deeds, for murder is not a sin if carried out in the interest of*



ANTE PAVELICH

Nazi Quisling of Croatia

the Catholic church. Several thousand Serbs, men, women, and children were tortured and murdered in the most cruel and beastly manner."

In other parts of this book there are documented accounts of priests who were leading governmental authorities under the *Ustashi* and the chief instigators of the mass murders. Such was the above-mentioned Father Brale of whom it is said on page 49: "*The executive power and authority in Sarajevo were in the hands of Hakiya Hadzich and the Catholic priest Brale. . . who was insistent on mass execution of the Serbs.*"

20TH CENTURY INQUISITION

"Conversion or death" was the slogan of the militant Catholic church of Croatia in this 20th century Inquisi-

tion. The report of the *Committee of Belgrade* issued on September 8, 1942, under the heading "The Catholicizing of the Serbian Orthodox People" stated (p. 177) as follows:

"With the first wave of terror the *Ustashi* and the authorities began to force the Serbs to accept the Catholic faith. In this Catholic priests especially distinguished themselves on all sides. The terrorized Serbs gave in here and there in the belief that in this way they would save their lives. . . . Public parades were held on the occasion of conversions. The people were forced to display a certain joy over their 'return to the faith of their fathers.' There were arranged delegations as a sign of gratitude and loyalty to Quisling Pavelich in Zagreb. Pavelich kissed one of the leaders of such a delegation."

The well-known rector of a Bulgarian Orthodox seminary in the capital of Bulgaria wrote an appeal to the bishop of the German Protestant church in Berlin to protest against this Catholic Inquisition. From page 281 the following excerpt from his appeal is quoted:

"It is quite evident that the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia together with the Roman Catholic clergy and Catholic leaders, were spiritual instigators and in some instances actual leaders in these persecutions, all in an effort to enforce the conversion of the Serbian Orthodox people into Catholicism. With the same purpose in mind the State employees of Orthodox faith were warned by printed pamphlets, a copy of which is on file, that in the Croatian State only those might remain who embraced the Catholic faith."

"As early as last summer the Croatian minister of State, Dr. Mile Budak, declared that upon the territory of the Croatian State only two religious denominations would be recognized—Roman Catholic and Mohammedan. The 'Catholic Weekly,' official organ of the Catholic diocese of Sarajevo, approves the methods of the destruction of the Orthodox Church as being 'to the glory

of God' and concludes: 'Today the hour has struck when even we Catholics, now and forever, shall part with the prejudices against the revolutionary methods which serve truth, justice, and honesty. The Catholic Church is the best educator and instigator of such movements.'"

In the same appeal several public statements of *Ustashi* state officials are referred to, such as this one by Dr. Victor Gutic: "Hundreds of thousands were murdered, hundreds of thousands were expelled from Croatian territory, and the remainder will be controlled and converted to Catholicism so that within a decade we shall have in Croatia purely Catholic people."

There is no instance in modern history where there was closer union between church and state than in Croatia. This was because Catholic prelates and priests were *Ustashi* leaders and led in the terroristic campaigns. In a report confirmed by the anti-Communist Yugoslav military headquarters in London the following fact was emphasized (p. 65):

"The Catholic clergy were invariably at the head of the *Ustashi* and in some instances they were active participants in the unspeakable crimes with gun and knife in their hands. They pointed out Serbs for murder and led *Ustashi* hordes. At Mostar, Reverend Leo Petrivic, secretary to the Catholic bishop, Dr. Taol, organized and led the bloody *Ustashi* activities in the villages around Ilie."

Complete Catholic control of the State made it possible to give plausible promises of immunity in exchange for conversion to Roman Catholicism. The report just mentioned, on page 65, goes on to say: "The Roman Catholic clergy intensified their efforts to convert the remaining Serbian populace to Catholicism, promising the people that by such conversion they could save their lives. Thus they succeeded in

converting about 30% of the remaining populace [who escaped murder or exile] to Catholicism."

The dominance of the *Ustashi* government made it possible for the Catholic bishops to lay down the law to them. A joint decree of all the Catholic bishops of Croatia stipulated (p. 274): "*Secular authorities have no right to annul conversions made by the Catholic Church representatives. . . . The Committee of the Croatian Catholic Bishops for Conversions will organize courses for those priests who are to act as instruments in the conversions of the Serbian Orthodox into the Catholic Church.*"

LIQUIDATION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

The sadistic attacks on the Orthodox people of Croatia were by no means a mere wave of fanaticism. They were carefully and cold-bloodedly planned, with deliberate concentration on the liquidation of Orthodox priests and bishops. Persecution of the Orthodox was a victory both for the Catholic Inquisition and for the Fascist State of Croatia with which the Catholic church had identified itself, for the Orthodox Christians were staunch democrats and haters of Fascism. The fate of the clergy is sharply etched in the above-quoted appeal to Berlin Protestants by the rector of a Bulgarian seminary (p. 279):

"The same fate befell the entire Orthodox clergy. They were ruthlessly murdered or were thrown into prison dungeons or concentration camps, or were driven from the territory after being subjected to terrific tortures and maltreatments. All of the Croatian Serbs within the territory of the Croatian State are at present without their clergy and without anyone to perform pastoral services for them, because all of the Serbian Orthodox bishops and priests were either sim-

ply exterminated in a most ruthless fashion. . . or were thrown into concentration camps, or driven away from their charges. And so the 2,000,000 Orthodox people in the Croatian State have no one to preach them the Gospel."

Several specific cases of Orthodox bishops who were tortured and murdered are given. The following excerpt from page 8 will suffice:

"In these persecutions the leaders of the Serbian Orthodox Church were always first to suffer. The Serbian Bishop Platon of Banja Luka was killed and his body, together with the bodies of several other murdered priests, was thrown into a river and it was some time before they were recovered. The Serbian Archbishop Petar Zimonich of Sarajevo, and Bishop Sava Trlaich of Plasky were imprisoned, mistreated, and tortured beyond endurance. They later died from maltreatment. The Archbishop of Zagreb was first imprisoned and then beaten and tortured in a most inhuman manner. Bishop Irenai of Dalmatia was also imprisoned and later transferred to an Italian concentration camp at Bagne a Ripoli, near the city of Florence. There are numerous other Serbian bishops who have been imprisoned. . . ."

In its warfare against heresy the Catholic church is always interested in financial gain as well as the destruction of spiritual freedom. In this persecution of the Orthodox Serbs, even aside from the pillaging of countless valuables and treasures, millions of dollars' worth of Orthodox properties were seized, including untold churches and monasteries. The following instances will serve to show how the Catholic church in Croatia enriched itself by seizing the possessions of the condemned just as it did during the days of the Inquisition:

"The monasteries, several of which

have a great tradition behind them, have been transferred to Roman Catholic religious Orders. Even the patriarchal center Sremski-Karlovci has not been spared. The patriarchal church was sealed after the most valuable treasures were taken away, the patriarchal library was plundered, and the patriarchal palace has been occupied by Catholics." (p. 44.)

"Many of the Orthodox churches were destroyed, others were burned, and still others, including church institutions and their properties were confiscated. . . Many of the Orthodox churches were desecrated. . . a number of them converted into Catholic edifices. . . Fifteen Serbian Orthodox monasteries and churches at Fruska Gora were given to the Catholic monks of the Franciscan order, as was also done with other church properties." (p. 280).

UNDER ORDERS OF THE VATICAN

Just as the Pope in Rome looked on with indifference while the head of the non-Roman Christian church in Abyssinia was brought to Italy in chains, so too did he give his tacit approval to crimes against the Orthodox church in Croatia. Odd conduct for one who pretends to be so concerned about the fate of the Orthodox church in Russia! It is not surprising then to find that the entire hierarchy of Croatia, which takes its orders directly from the Vatican, did not even go through the motions of protesting against the outrages and crimes perpetrated daily under their eyes. So unbearable did this hypocritical silence become that some of the more decent Roman Catholic laymen protested to the hierarchy against their criminal silence. Such is the letter from which the following excerpt is taken—a letter written on February 8, 1942, to the Roman Catholic Archbishop Aloysius Stepinac of Zagreb by a for-

mer minister of the Yugoslav cabinet, Prvislav Grizogno, a Roman Catholic Croat:

"In all these unprecedented crimes, worse than pagan, our Catholic Church has also participated in two ways. First, a large number of priests, clerics, friars, and organized Catholic youth actively participated in all these crimes, but, more terrible, even Catholic priests became camp commanders and, as such, ordered or tolerated the horrible tortures, murders and massacres of a baptized people. One Catholic priest slit the throat of an Orthodox Serbian priest. None of this could have been done without the permission of their Bishops, and, since it was done, they should have been brought to the ecclesiastical court and unfrocked. Since this did not happen, then obviously the Bishops gave their consent, by acquiescence at least."

"Friars and nuns carried 'Ustashi' knives in one hand and a cross and a prayer-book in the other. The province of Srem is covered with the leaflets of Bishop Akshamovich, which were printed in his own print shop at Djakovo. He calls upon the Serbs, through these leaflets, to save their lives and property, recommending the Catholic faith to them . . . In our country not one Bishop has decried the fate of the innocent Christian Serbs who have suffered more than the Jews in Germany." (p. 292).

Such is the indictment of the Roman Catholic church in Croatia. The results of this sadism are best summarized in the words of the book we have been quoting that documents its charges beyond the shadow of a doubt: On page 7 it declares as follows: "*If we were to enumerate all the Serbian victims, we would be confronted with the grim realization that about 700,000 Serbs have been butchered in the so-called 'Free Croatian State' of Quisling Pavelich alone. In addition, we would find many thousands who were forced under pain of death to convert from the Orthodox faith to Roman Catholicism.*"

CONCLUSION

Nothing could illustrate better than this list of horrors the truth of the saying that "Rome never reforms." Nor could a clearer case be made to prove that now as always "the end justifies the means," in the eyes of the power-hungry rulers of the Roman church. The very same horrors were perpetrated by the Catholic church in Poland in forcing the conversion of the Orthodox Ukrainians who had been annexed to Poland in 1918 by the unlawful seizure of land east of the Curzon Line. But in neither case have the facts been brought to the attention of the democratic world because of the air-tight censorship of the world press exercised by Vatican agents. As one reviews these facts, given here in sufficient detail, he cannot but conclude that, since the conduct of the Croats is the result of their 1,000-year old Catholicism, it might have been better if they had remained decent pagans.

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In Your Christmas Giving
Remember Our Work at
Christ's Mission

ANSWERS

By JOSEPH ZACCHELLO

PROTESTANTS are often unable to answer satisfactorily the inquiries of their Roman Catholic friends concerning matters vital to the way of salvation. This is especially so regarding the correct interpretation of parts of Scripture texts quoted by Roman Catholics to substantiate what they are taught to believe. Each month, Mr. Zacchello, a former Catholic priest, devotes a page to answering some of the more important questions of this nature. (All Scripture texts quoted are from the approved Roman Catholic or Douay version of the New Testament.)

His answer this month concerns

NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING
VERSUS ROMAN CATHOLIC
TRADITION.

ROMAN CATHOLICS SAY:

The Bible is not a sufficient rule of faith, because it does not contain all that God has revealed. God's revelation is also contained in tradition, that is, in the spoken word of Christ to his apostles, which was not written down by them. The following texts of Scripture prove this:

"There are, however, many other things that Jesus did; but if every one of these should be written, not even the world itself, I think, could hold the books that would have to be written."—John 21:25.

"So then, Brethren, stand firm, and hold the teachings that you have learned, whether by word or by letter of ours."—II Thess. 11:15.

"I had much to write to thee; but I